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*Presbyterian Church of the United States, Board  
of Publication.*

## **A Denominational Press.**

# **SHALL THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USE THE PRESS?**

**A PLEA FOR THE**

**Presbyterian Publication Committee.**

—  
"IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?"  
—



**PHILADELPHIA:**  
**PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATION COMMITTEE,**  
1334 CHESTNUT STREET.  
**NEW YORK A. D. F. RANDOLPH, 683 BROADWAY.**



## A DENOMINATIONAL PRESS.

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IF there ever has been an age, or a land, demanding a living, acting, aggressive spirit in the Church, this is that age, and this is that land. An age instinct with life, in a land whose one characteristic is life, demands a living Church.

In the highest import of the term, the Church's life depends upon her vital union with her living head; and may God vouchsafe to her more and more of that life! But it is to that external life and activity by which the inner life is impressed upon the world, that reference is now had. It is in

this sense that a *living Church* is demanded by the land and age in which God has cast our lot. The Church that would make headway, that would be successful in doing its whole work, and leaving its mark upon our national life, must be a living, active, aggressive body.

The first element of power in such a Church, is a *ministry* with apostolic faith joined to apostolic enterprise. The second element is *the printed page*, the auxiliary of such a ministry, explaining, confirming, and supplementing its teachings.

The thought is a trite one; its obvious truth has made it trite. It is a pity that it is so. Axioms often weigh less with the public than paradoxes, not that they are less weighty, but less new. Men wonder at the tornado, who think nothing of their daily allowance of atmospheric air; the sunlight is less impressive than the light-

ning's flash. So, having often heard of "the power of the press," men drink in the words with no apprehension of the fact which they express. They daily see strange, beneficent, or horrid results, but have no notion of their unseen causes. The power of the printed page, as a bearer of thought and motive, its connection with daily history, is to them unknown, because unnoticed. They learn in the morning's journal of a munificent gift to a worthy object, but they know not that the *reading of a tract* lay back of that gift. They sicken at the report of bloodshed in the place of debauch, but they know not *the book* by which the mind of that young man was debauched before his feet had trod the path of overt sin. Like the engineer, who, with his wires and his galvanic battery, is far from the explosion of which he is the unseen cause, the author is not seen in

contact with the results of his labors. The press sends the electric spark of thought, flashing from the laboratory of the writer's brain, through sea and land. It flies unchecked by oceans and continents, and the catastrophe ensues; but to the world the connection is all unknown. We would that they on whose ears those words, "the power of the press," fall with a familiarity which has bred contempt, might learn their meaning. It is not our purpose at present to unfold the truth with regard to that power, but rather to assert it, and to invite our readers to some thoughts which it suggests as to the duty of our own Presbyterian Church to use the press.

How stand the facts as to the use of the press in America? Universal suffrage makes every citizen a politician, and hence a reader. The demand for books, papers, and periodicals, mostly confined in Europe

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to the more affluent classes, here comes from the whole mass of the population. It is not only the scholar, the gentleman, the professional man, and the merchant, who read in America. The mechanic, also, must have his daily paper, and his sons and daughters must have their books. So it is with the tradesman. The farmer's table is well covered with magazines and periodicals. The laborers in our factories and shops read. The porter reads as he sits upon the curbstone waiting for a job, and the drayman reads upon his dray. The cook in the kitchen, as well as the lady in the parlor, reads. The old and the young, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, unite to swell the demand for the products of the press in all their forms. To meet this demand, millions of pages issue daily from thousands of presses. All conceivable topics—and some topics inconceivable by



most minds—are discussed; views of every possible shade are expressed; influences of every imaginable direction are put forth. The whole nation places itself under the tuition of this myriad-voiced teacher, and thoughts, wishes, hopes, aims, deeds, spring into life and shape under its moulding powers. The belief of the individual, the movements of religious bodies, the politics of the neighborhood, the State, the nation, all take the impress of its hand.

Who stand at the head of this stream, to color its waters and to guide its course? Men as various in their opinions and objects as are their utterances. The field is open to all men. The good and the bad, the moralist, the Christian, the infidel, and the bestial debauchee, all stand on a level, and each sends out his own train of influences. Honorable men there are, in charge of establishments for the publication of

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books, of periodicals, or of daily papers, who honestly desire to issue nothing prejudicial to morality or Christianity. Some such there are who will even make considerable pecuniary sacrifices rather than do the public wrong. Yet, on the most charitable view of the whole wide field, it cannot be denied that books from the most reputable publishers, and reviews, magazines, and journals from highly respected editors, teem with views utterly at variance with Scripture and at war with Christianity. Not merely a literature that is sickly, useless, enervating, and nauseous to a sound manly taste, but a literature positively pernicious, floods the country under the auspices of houses of the most reputable standing. False views of vital questions of morality, and insidious attacks upon the religion of the Bible, thus gain currency, and undermine the faith of the young and inex-

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perienced. It is too much to expect of business men, taken in the mass, a rigid censorship of the press.

But, leaving the field occupied by houses of respectability, beyond the limits of decency there lies another class of publications, too influential to be unnoticed,—a class of publications opening to the public gaze scenes of ruffianism, of brutality, and of crime in their most noxious shapes. These are openly vended in our streets, advertised (with all the attractiveness which a promise of such revelations has for the corrupt taste of man) in the papers which we receive into our families, sent to our country towns, scattered among our youth, and brought into our very homes. They come as ladders to the pit, to lead the young soul in the descending way to sin, to shame, and everlasting woe.

Beyond these still, there is yet another

class of works, not openly sold, but cunningly and secretly put into the hands of the young to lure and guide them to the avenues of vice and ruin; books that stamp upon the soul stains that nothing but death will erase. Exhalations of the pit, they arise unseen, they are received by the victim, and his soul is steeped in death. If there be a stepping-stone to hell more easily trod than another, *the press* furnishes that stepping-stone, and places it in the pathway of the young.

The Church of God cannot shut her eyes to these facts. The literature that is worldly, fleshly, devilish, must be met. It must be met on its own ground and with its own weapons. Books, papers, periodicals, will flow fast and fresh from its presses. The world will not rest on the past, if we do. Christianity must have her presses too,—yes, and Christians must use them. The

pastor, the missionary, the teacher, the parent, all must be furnished for the conflict with evil. Nor, after the furnishing of a living ministry, is there a higher work for the Church in her warfare than the work of furnishing a Christian literature.

Not stopping to argue a point that must be conceded, let us go on to the question, "HOW SHALL THIS DEMAND BE MET?"

*Shall it be left to the enterprise of individual Christians?* Much may be done in this way. The Church has already received efficient aid from private establishments. But can the whole responsibility of a work so momentous in its issues, so delicate in its parts, and so immense in its scope, be left to individual enterprise? It cannot. The efforts of individuals, moved by philanthropy, and with no expectation of gain, though often valuable, must of necessity be discursive and unreliable. Nor can trades-

men be expected to sacrifice profit to principle, or to publish what will not pay. In fact, *this question has been answered by the acts of the Christian public.* Convinced of the necessity of associated effort for the use of the press, Christian men, in Europe and in America, from various branches of the Church, have united in the formation of societies for religious publication. These societies, sustained by the gifts of Christian benevolence, have put into wide circulation the Bible and many religious books and tracts suited to young and old. They have employed hundreds of agents to carry these books to the neglected, the poor, and the tempted. They have given them to the needy or the indifferent, and, adorning them with all the attractiveness of costly paper and binding, have introduced them to the mansions of the rich. They have sent them forth to combat with the lite-

rature of an ungodly world. They have done a glorious work,—one easily carped at in its details, and, doubtless, not without its admixture of mistake, but in its aim and its success honorable alike to the wisdom of those with whom these societies originated, and the liberality of those by whom they have been sustained. Without these associated enterprises for the use of the press, the Church of God in America would not now stand where it does. In no country is the necessity for such efforts so pressing as in our own new, broad land, with its scattered, inquisitive, active, heterogeneous population.

It is no discredit to the Union Societies to which reference has been made, to say *that they cannot do the whole work*. The support which they have received from Christians of various names has testified to their value as one of the agencies needed

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for the dissemination of truth by means of the press. The same practical testimony, on the part of all denominations, declares it to be the result of experience that they cannot do all that is to be done in this direction. Were the Church in its organization one, and in its theology one, its work of publication would be one. Divided as it is into several branches, with separate organizations and varying opinions upon minor points in doctrine as well as in order, it has been found necessary that each should do for itself that part of this labor which especially belongs to it. Whilst Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians can unite in the production and circulation of a literature which enforces the broad truths of their common faith, experience has taught each Church that it must use the press *as a denomination* for the promulgation of those views



of truth which *belong to it as a denomination.*

No other organization separately, nor all unitedly, can furnish the Methodist with that which is demanded by his peculiar church discipline and the special type of theology which he holds. He must look to his own church organizations for such a use of the press as will meet the exigencies of his faith and practice. So is it with the Baptist. If he wishes his views of church government, or of the ordinance of baptism, to be advocated, he must look to a Baptist and not to a Union source for the supply of this demand. So also the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Lutheran, the Congregationalist, must all publish for themselves that which is demanded by the views, the discipline, and the aims of their own Church. Experience has led every important body of Christians in our country to the esta-

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blishment of an organization for the production of a religious literature positive and controversial, as well as evangelical.

Aside from theory, this unanimity of action is the strongest argument in favor of the wisdom of such a course.

No one who will be at the trouble to look into the matter will deny that a large share of the efficiency of the strongest religious denominations of America is due to their energetic use of the press. There is no one thing which tends more directly to unite, to render homogeneous and to invigorate a Church, than a wise use of this grand agency. In support of this assertion, we would instance the Methodist Episcopal Church, North. With some features in its policy entirely repugnant to the sense of Protestantism and to the genius of the American people, it is the most solid, compact, and aggressive religious body in the

land. Not only is it in itself an army well equipped and compacted, but it constantly diffuses its principles and widens its influence. Whilst we recognize and honor the evangelistic posture of the denomination as one source of its power, we as unmistakably see in its rich, powerful, and well-ordered "Book Concern" another great agent in the production of this result. With its accumulated capital of \$600,000, it is able to issue any work demanded by the necessities of the denomination. With its long catalogue of practical and controversial works, it meets the wants of its ministry and its members, and in its twelve hundred books for Sunday-schools it offers a full source of supply in this respect. With the whole ministry of the Church as its agents, it circulates its books and papers everywhere. Its Sunday-School Advocate goes forth to the number of 200,000 of each issue. Thus

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it instructs and strengthens its own people and consolidates its forces, exerting an accumulated influence upon other denominations, as well as upon the world lying beyond the Church.

Nor is it to be denied that our brethren of the other branch of the Presbyterian Church owe much to their Board of Publication. In its issues their ministry have the materials for their work ready to their hands. Through it they labor for their Church in places and at times when the voice could not or would not be heard. The facilities which it affords their ministry for the exposition, defence, and enforcement of their views are not likely to be overrated; whilst in its employment for setting forth the history of the past and the opinions of other religious bodies, its power is but too well known to many within the pale of our own body. If we take exception to this

feature of its work on grounds of truth and fairness, we cannot but accord to it the wise use, in other respects, of a mighty engine of influence. Its publications, which in 1860, *exceeded one million* in number, issued at a cost of \$126,000, tell with great force upon the prosperity of that branch of the Church. By its volumes for ministers and laymen, for Sunday-schools and strangers, by its "*Record*," for the churches, and its "*Visitor*," for the children, it is guarding its own fold, and adding to its influence in this land.

The Baptists have long been active in this work. For thirty-six years they have had an organization, also in the city of Philadelphia, "The American Baptist Publication Society," from which have issued *two hundred and fifty millions of pages*. Their Sunday-school paper, "*The Young Reaper*," has a circulation of 96,000. Their

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bound volumes number 302; their publications, bound and unbound, more than six hundred. This establishment they look upon as the "right arm" of their denominational power. During the past year forty-two colporteurs were employed in disseminating its issues. To render it more efficient, and to give it that pecuniary basis without which the work of publication on an extended scale is impossible, it has been resolved to add *one hundred thousand dollars* to the capital of the Society. This work, which has made good progress, when done, will tell upon the future history of that Church.

Not to go too far into details, it may be said, in general, that every branch of the Church has entered upon this mode of effort. The Episcopalians have a "*Church Book Society*" for the High-Church side of the house, and the "*Evangelical*

*Knowledge Society*," an excellent and useful organization, in the hands of the evangelical part of the Church. The Dutch Reformed have a "*Board of Publication*;" so also have the Lutherans, Moravians, and other minor denominations. Our Congregational brethren have the "*Congregational Board of Publication*," which issues volumes and doctrinal tracts, and also the "*Massachusetts Sabbath-School Society*," with a catalogue of a thousand publications. The Methodist Church, South, with a capital of \$300,000, resolved to add \$200,000 to that capital; and they say that they will do it, too!

*What do these facts mean?* Is not their meaning plain,—too plain to be mistaken? They say, with a palpable power, that experience testifies to the value of the denominational press, that this is one of the things which a living Church in a living age and a

living country must have! They say that if it be the duty of a given branch of the Church to exist, if it be its duty to plant churches, to build houses of worship, to sustain pastors, to send forth missionaries, as truly is it its duty to propagate the truth by disseminating through the press those influences which it holds to be precious to itself and desirable for others.

Whilst it is true, beyond question or cavil, as it appears to us, that the press should be used by every denomination to expound, advocate, and defend the doctrines and order of the denomination, this is not the only ground of obligation for entering upon this work. Each organized Christian body owes a duty to the only head which it recognizes—the one great Head of the Church—to send abroad his gospel in every practicable mode. Whilst this can be done, in some directions, by societies composed of Chris-



tians of different names united for that purpose, there are points unreached by these societies, which may be reached by a denominational committee or board. Men who will not seek a given tract or book, or who will never receive it, from the former source, may and will receive it, often seek for it, from the latter. Thus, then, comes upon the denomination a duty to issue those works which it believes will conduce to the salvation and the sanctification of men. Can it be doubted that a vast multitude of Methodists and Baptists and Presbyterians have been made acquainted with the truth and educated in godliness through denominational organizations, who would otherwise never have been reached by the religious press? We advocate not all that is issued by these presses; but it is undeniable that they have done much to diffuse a valuable gospel literature. And when we

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apply this thought to our own body, is it not a fact that we can give the truth from our own sources, through our own ministry, to those who otherwise would not receive it? We have our weekly Presbyterian papers. They cannot go into every home where the *American Messenger* or the *Sunday-School Times* finds lodgment. Yet they are a necessity of our existence as a denomination, and, whilst existing primarily for the denomination, they at the same time carry into new channels those same influences which make the Union papers a blessing to many. The religious press, in the hands of a denomination, carries saving influences where they would be borne by no other agency.

Moreover, it may be questioned whether we, as a body of Christians, can properly withhold from the world the doctrines of our blessed religion *in those connections in*

which we believe that they are taught in God's word. Our duty as a Church is to EDUCATE the people under our influence: this we cannot do to the full without presenting entire the system of religion which we believe to be most closely conformed to the truth.

It must at once be frankly conceded that our own denomination has not in this matter kept pace with others. For many years the whole subject lay untouched, and at this day we are only entering with feeble and laborious, though quickening, steps, upon this department of church work. Since we cannot be so arrogant as to suppose that the unanimity with which this agency has been laid hold upon by our sister denominations is the result of a unanimity in folly or wickedness from which we alone have been preserved, the question arises—

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*Whether there is any thing in our position or principles, as a denomination, that should lead us to differ from other Christian bodies in this respect?* Whilst the Methodists and Baptists, Congregationalists and Episcopalians, our Presbyterian brethren and the Dutch Reformed, the Lutheran and the Moravian, are led to engage with more or less zeal in the spread of their views through the printed page, is there any thing in our theology, our character as a denomination, or our historic position, that forbids, or should forbid, our laboring side by side with them in this mode of effort? Let us look briefly at the matter.

*Is there, then, any thing in the theology of the Constitutional Presbyterian Church that would discourage this use of the press? Are our views of Scripture truth such that we dare not define, expound, and defend*

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them? Is our theology one which cannot bear the light? Would it suffer if brought in comparison, under the light of God's word and the scrutiny of free discussion, with the views of the religious bodies in the midst of which we dwell? Is it not rather a theology based upon the letter and the spirit of Scripture?—a theology whose symbols claim the admiration of Christendom, and command the respect even of their enemies, by their logic, their unity, and their simple force?—a theology strictly Biblical, yet philosophical; Calvinistic, yet liberal; honoring God, yet not repelling man? In a word, is not our theology one that shrinks from no test, avoids no discussion, suffers by no examination? Why, then, may we not publish it to the world? Nay, how can we refrain from sending it on the printed page, as well as from the preacher's lips, broadcast over our land,

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to do its part in forming the religious sentiments of a great and yet plastic nation? If ever there was a body intrusted with sentiments at once in harmony with God's law and man's best hopes, our own is that body. We look in vain to our theology for reasons for the disuse of the press as a denomination.

*Is there any thing in the characteristics of our Church, its order, discipline, ministry, membership, to discourage a denominational use of the press? Its order is eminently in harmony with Scripture, not merely, but also with the genius of American institutions. Free, yet guarded from abuse by a constitution and laws,—democratic, in that the people are the seat of its power, yet republican in its government and courts,—its order is one that we need not be ashamed to publish anywhere, least of all to publish in *this* land. Despots and*

their supporters might well abhor Presbyterianism, as always republican. To the American people the more fully it is made known the more will it commend itself. Are not our ministry and membership, in their prominent characteristics, just such as they should be to encourage this very enterprise? Whether as writers or readers, they are the fit constituency of a vigorous system of religious publication. With an educated, active ministry, and a people eminently thoughtful and intelligent, we look here also in vain for any grounds of indifference to this work. Nay, in the fact that our ministry is to a great extent a missionary ministry and our people a scattered people—the fact that in proportion to our means we occupy a wide extent of territory—we find peculiar reasons for an earnest interest in the full equipment of both ministry and members with the

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printed page. They need the very furniture for their warfare for which they can look only to their own denomination.

*Is there any thing in our history, in our past associations, or in our present position, to deter us from such a use of the press as that under consideration?* We readily concede that in the past there lie memories, habits, and associations which strongly tend to deter us from denominational efforts of any kind, whether for educational purposes, for missions, or for publication. We owe our separate existence largely to our adherence to catholicity in sentiment and co-operation in effort. Had the men of 1837 consented to enter upon a strictly ecclesiastical policy, to the rejection of the principle of union with other denominations in the various forms of religious propaganda, one of the causes of the division would have been removed. Undeniably,

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our historic antecedents are not favorable to denominational action. Having, for a series of years, acted upon the principle of co-operation in evangelization,—having thrown our whole influence into co-operative channels,—having given to them our affections, our funds, our pens, to the total rejection of denominational institutions,—and having educated our churches, for a generation, in this mode of action *only*,—it would be strange indeed if a denominational enterprise should at once find favor with our ministry and our people. Even having found *favor*, it is no easy work for it to find a *place* amid the many excellent institutions already on the roll of our benevolence.

Yet, whilst it is acknowledged that our past associations have a tendency to discourage this enterprise in common with all others wearing an ecclesiastical garb, it may well be asked whether in our dread

of sectarianism we have not run to the opposite extreme. Selfishness is a sore evil; but so is prodigality. He who centres all his efforts upon his family, to the neglect of those claims which the community has upon him, does wrong; but he will not rectify the wrong by paying no attention to his family and bestowing all his labors upon the community. It has been quite customary to pit union and denominational modes of evangelization the one against the other, as though the two were in conflict. Thus was it twenty years ago in the Presbyterian Church. Hence much strife and bitterness and division. But how needless is this controversy! The two are right. Each has its field. Some ends are in their essence peculiar to a given body, and can only be attained by that body in its individual, organic capacity. Other ends are in their nature equally desirable and practi-

cable to all evangelical Christians, and these should be attained by co-operative benevolence.

It can scarcely be doubted that our own Church, in its dread of sectarianism, has too long neglected interests properly lying at its door. The error—if such it be—has been a generous one: yet it is not less generous now to begin that to which, in the providence of God, we are called. If it be a fact that *some things* we must do for ourselves because we cannot fairly ask others to do them for us, then let us recognise the fact, and manfully act upon it.

One of the things that we must do, is to use the press for the dissemination of those views of scriptural truth, of right, and of order, which we believe to be adapted to bless, to sanctify, and to save our fellow-men. That we can do this without the narrowness of the sectarian, or the

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bitterness of the polemic, is a favor for which we cannot be sufficiently thankful. We are compelled by no view of truth which we hold, to malign or injure others whilst defending our own sentiments. Our doctrine as to the ministry does not compel us in its advocacy to deny the validity of the ministry of other Christian Churches. Our views as to baptism do not force us to unchurch those who administer that rite differently from ourselves. Our sacramental board is fenced about by no barrier forbidding us to invite to it *all* who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth. Our church order may be commended and sustained without impugning the validity of orders other than our own.

That we are thus enabled to maintain our views as a denomination, to defend and to propagate them, without unchurching, deposing, or excluding our brethren of other



denominations, whilst it calls upon us for gratitude, lays also upon us a responsibility which we cannot avoid. It is our duty to show to the world a theology devoid of bigotry, a creed without uncharitableness, an order free from all narrowness and exclusivism. If our theology is scriptural, our sentiments catholic, our church government in harmony with the genius of our free institutions, it is our duty to bring them to the light. If there is any thing in our Church precious to us, let that blessing be given to others; let this Church be preserved intact; let our children abide in it, and let others enter it to partake of its spirit and spread its influences.

To illustrate a proper, wise, and righteous denominationalism,—one equally removed from indifference on the one hand and from dogmatism on the other,—a denomination catholic and co-operative, yet true



to itself and to its special duties,—a denominationalism that protects itself, not for itself, but for Christ and his cause,—is a high calling. Is not that calling ours? There are dangers on the right hand and the left; yet, looking to God for grace and wisdom, we may safely steer between Scylla and Charybdis, and keep the true channel with our gospel-freighted bark.

There occurs to us but one remaining question with regard to our duty to use the press in our denominational capacity; it is, that *principles so excellent may well be left to take care of themselves*. If we go forward preaching the truth, need we fear for our prosperity as a denomination? Pleasing as is this suggestion, it is, unfortunately, untrue. An ecclesiastical organization needs something more than a true scriptural basis to insure its prosperity. That basis must be built upon. Stone must

be laid upon stone, and wing added to wing, and, as the building enlarges, there must be one harmonious idea carried out by the various workmen. The work cannot be left to hap-hazard reliance upon the truth which lies at the bottom. The best sentiments will die out unless they are inculcated. The most scriptural denomination will be forsaken by its children if they are never taught to value it. Evil is at work on every hand: it is native to the soil; it ever lives, and propagates itself, and it will cover the face of the land if it is not met and overcome. It will not do in this grasping, selfish world to trust to the goodness of your principles: they must be maintained and defended. The best seed must not be left to itself: it must be planted, watered, nurtured, protected.

Of all the evangelical denominations of America, perhaps none more needs the com-

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pacting and strengthening influence of a denominational literature than our own.

In the warmth and scope of our liberality, it can scarcely be questioned that we have bestowed too little attention upon our own wants as a Church. Our sons going forth into the ever-widening fields of labor presented by our great country have in general been blessed with a truly Christian love of union. They have ever been ready to co-operate with others, when others could be found willing to co-operate with them. But, whilst thus equipped with a catholic spirit, they have found themselves less adequately provided with the means of self-defence amid the clashing interests incident to our imperfect mental and moral state. Going into a society heterogeneous, released from the trammels of conventionalism, and unsettled as to matters of faith, they have felt the want of books and tracts with which to



meet the question, "What are the doctrines of your Church?" In these circumstances, it became desirable to have publications for which, in a more staid and fixed state of society, but little want had been felt. Misrepresentations of Calvinistic doctrine were found to be rife in the popular mind. Presbyterianism as a system was misunderstood. False views of our history as a denomination were wide-spread. Hence, the means of meeting these misunderstandings and misrepresentations, and of plainly setting forth our views of truth, became an imperative want of our pioneer ministry.

It was from this class of men, the self-denying workers who are founding churches and rearing presbyteries and synods through the broad West, that the call came in which the *Presbyterian Publication Committee* had its rise. Whilst they were unprovided with the means of meeting

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this want, they found themselves in competition with those who were fully equipped. All around them were the representatives of active and enterprising religious organizations, less scriptural—as we believe—in their views, but well provided with printed tracts and books with which to educate a rising community in their tenets. The Methodist, the Baptist, the “Old School” man, the Episcopalian, each had an armory from which to draw weapons for the extension of his peculiar views; and these weapons were vigorously used; but our own earnest workers were not thus armed. And is it a thing unreasonable that they should ask for aid in this matter? They presented their request from time to time, and in 1852, by the General Assembly meeting in Washington, a “*Standing Committee on Doctrinal Tracts*” was appointed, “to superintend the publication

of a series of tracts explanatory of the doctrines, government, and missionary policy of the Presbyterian Church." The title of this committee was changed by the Assembly of 1855 to that which it now bears,—“THE PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATION COMMITTEE;” and in 1857 its sphere of operations was enlarged so as to cover the wide domain of religious publication.

While the organized movement on the part of our Church, since its disruption, to use the press is thus recent, it is an interesting fact that we are not undertaking a work founded upon recent views. More than one hundred and twenty years ago,—in 1735,—the Synod of Philadelphia, then the highest judicatory of the Church, appointed a committee for the supervision of published religious discussion. Even at that early day it was found that the interests of a federated Church demanded an over-

sight of the publications of the press on religious matters. From time to time through the eighteenth century, the Synod, and afterwards the General Assembly, directed the purchase and distribution of religious books on "the frontiers," and the publication of the standards of the Church, proofs, &c. So, also, in the early part of the present century this course was continued, and appropriations were made for the distribution of books among the needy and the colored population; and in 1809 the Assembly recommended the formation of Synodical Tract Societies, to secure the distribution of religious tracts within their bounds.

After the division which occurred in 1837, the other branch of the Presbyterian Church threw its whole force into ecclesiastical organizations. Among its other Boards, that of Publication soon attracted

its attention, and enlisted the services of many of its ablest men. With a steady growth it has been carried forward, until it now constitutes one of the strongest elements of power in connection with that body. Whether viewed in its effect in consolidating the denomination and rendering it homogeneous in sentiment, or in its value as an agent for church extension, it holds a high place among its sources of strength.

From causes to which reference has already been made, it was not until the year 1852 that our own branch of the Church inaugurated its movement for the use of the press. Nor, for several years, was much more done than to resolve to do this much-needed work.

At last, however, a conviction of the importance of this branch of church enterprise has forced itself upon the minds of the thoughtful in the denomination. It is

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seen that we cannot afford longer to neglect the use of this most potent agency for instructing and moving men. We have entered upon the task. A beginning has been made. A noble property has been purchased for a Publication House, in Philadelphia, and presented to the General Assembly as a home for this work. A good beginning has been made, too, in the issue of books and tracts,—though with no small difficulty, from the lack of a suitable capital. The Church, through her highest council, earnestly calls upon her members to strengthen and carry forward the work. She asks that they should place it upon a fitting basis, with a sufficient capital, to execute so vastly important an office.

*And shall it not be done?*

To have founded a college, to have endowed a hospital, to have built a church, is an honor. To have aided in these endow-

ments is a privilege. Not less is it a privilege to aid in the establishment of a PRESS from which shall flow streams of living water, not less an honor to endow it and to make it a *perennial fountain*, in a thirsty world.

Have we not men wise enough to apprehend the facts, liberal enough to do that which wisdom, piety, and generosity would dictate?

## OUR PUBLICATION ENTERPRISE.

(*From the American Presbyterian.*)

WHAT is worth doing at all is worth doing well. If we are to have a Publication House and a Publication Committee, let us, by all means, have the benefit of them.

To own a valuable property in Philadelphia is a very good thing; and to have a wise and whole-souled committee is a very good thing; but, unless we put into the hands of this committee *a capital with which to work*, we make very little progress towards getting what we want. The manufacturer who builds his factory, constructs his engine, rigs his wheels, and hires his men, but furnishes



neither fuel for the engine nor raw material for the spindles, may have made a very good beginning, but he will not bring much to pass in the way of *results*, excepting to swamp himself and waste his money.

Now, we do not intend to insinuate that in our publication effort we have played this part; but we must say that we have come very near to it. We have, by the aid of some noble souls, secured to the denomination a very valuable property in Philadelphia. We have thus testified to our self-consciousness, and to our determination, as a Christian body, to live and act. This is good. We have given our committee instructions to do great things for our Church and the world. This is good. We have furnished fuel enough to set the machinery in motion, and material enough to get out samples, showing what we can do; and this is good, so far as it goes. But we have

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not gone into the enterprise with such life and vigor and self-committal as to make it a self-supporting concern, wide-spread in its influence and effects.

This is poor economy. We should either put our publication cause on its feet, or we should allow it to sleep until we are ready to give it an efficient start. As to feeding it on *resolutions*, and working it by good intentions and warm approbation, with a very small allowance of the sinews of war, we may as well give over any hopes of so cheap a road to success. There is no use whatever in shutting our eyes to the fact that MONEY IS A NECESSITY in this undertaking. Men of large views give five, ten, twenty, fifty thousand dollars to colleges, hospitals, asylums. Why not do as much to give to a great denomination an efficient use of the press? Other denominations have already done this work. We are late, and

ceived from him, if we did not do it. We believe that the best interests of our country, and of the world, are identified with the spread of the pure gospel, and that the form in which we have received it is indispensable to the best development of true religion."

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#### FORM OF BEQUEST.

I GIVE and bequeath to the Trustees of the Presbyterian House, incorporated April 21, 1855, by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, the sum of —— dollars, to be expended under the direction and for the appropriate uses of the Publication Committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.